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Letter from the U.S. High Commissioner to the Soviet High Commissioner

American Embassy,
Vienna, Austria,
October 13, 1952.

Dear General Sviridov:

I have studied the statements contained in your letter of October 2 concerning treatment of the Soviet Repatriation Mission in the US Zone, and compared them with accounts furnished by my escort personnel. I agree that the size of the escort might be reduced in the future, but wish to emphasize that they accompany the group simply to insure the safety of the Soviet officers. As can be confirmed by Lieutenant Colonel Andreiev, there were one or two demonstrations of hostility during their visits to displaced persons camps which might have grown more serious had it not been for the presence of US officers.

Regarding the distribution of printed matter by the Soviet Mission, I believe that it is the US Element which is entitled to a complaint. The magazines which were handed out by the Soviet Mission contained articles slandering the United States. I am sure you will agree that propaganda of this nature has nothing to do with the purpose of the Soviet Repatriation Mission's visit, and is in any case inexcusable. Not until we realized the nature of this material was further distribution suspended.

The US authorities who supervise repatriation activities have established certain operational procedures which are drawn up to facilitate maximum accomplishment of the Mission's work. Nevertheless, I will review them to determine whether modifications are indicated.

Sincerely yours,

Llewellyn E. Thompson, Jr.
United States High Commissioner

Lt. General V. P. Sviridov,
Soviet High Commissioner,
Allied Commission for Austria,
Vienna.

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It is quite natural that under such conditions the Soviet Mission during its work in the US Zone was deprived of the opportunity to meet and to speak freely with Soviet displaced citizens on the subject of their repatriation, and, therefore, it was not able to fulfill the tasks assigned to it.

In view of the foregoing, I request you to give attention to establishing more normal working conditions in the future for the Soviet Repatriation Mission in the US Zone.

With the expression of my high esteem,

Lt. General /s/ V.P. SVIRIDOV

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